

1606/1549  
L E T T E R

TO THE

TREASURER OF THE SOCIETY

INSTITUTED

FOR THE PURPOSE OF EFFECTING

T H E

Abolition of the Slave Trade.

F R O M

The Rev. ROBERT BOUCHER NICKOLLS,

DEAN OF MIDDLEHAM.

THE FOURTH EDITION WITH CONSIDERABLE  
ADDITIONS.



L O N D O N :

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LONDON, No. 18, Old Jewry, Oct. 30, 1787.

At a Committee of the Society instituted for the purpose of effecting the Abolition of the Slave-Trade.

A Letter from the Rev. Robert Boucher Nickolls, Dean of Middleham, addressed to the Treasurer, having been read,

RESOLVED,

That the thanks of this Committee be given to the Rev. Robert Boucher Nickolls, Dean of Middleham, for his interesting letter of the 19th inst. and for the offer of his services: And this Committee being sensible of the advantage that may accrue to the cause of humanity by the publication of the said letter, the Chairman is requested to solicit the Dean of Middleham's leave to circulate the same in print.

GRANVILLE SHARP, Chairman.

## P R E F A C E.

**A**NOTHER impression of the following letter having been desired, I think it necessary to say something of the first, in answer to certain objections that have been urged against some positions in it. It was originally designed to *suggest* topics of *inquiry* to some gentlemen on the subject. That it might *suggest* the same to the public was the reason it was printed by particular desire of the Committee of the Society to whom it was addressed. It was by no means designed as a system of evidence, as appears from the words of the letter itself, referring the Society to *better* information than I was able to give after an absence of almost 18 years from the West Indies, and where my last residence had been only for the short space of two years. My nearest connexions also leaving it soon after, and a variety of events in America drawing off my attention, my correspondence with the West Indies was interrupted; but not from any want of regard to several most worthy and respectable characters there: men whose virtues and understanding effect all that in such a state of things can be effected, the present comfort and well-being of their several dependants.

But





But the impression made on my mind at that time by the system of slavery, has remained strong ever since. An amendment of that system I have often wished for, but never expected to see attempted; such was the force of prejudice, and interest ill understood, which I saw ready to encounter every effort of that kind. Some hope was however kindled, when I observed in the publick prints an advertisement from the Society in London, to whom the following letter is addressed. With the ardour of a renewed affection, I instantaneously communicated the little that hung loosely and unconnected in my memory, and almost worn out; wishing them, as I had no other documents than my recollection afforded, to ascertain from proper authorities, the suggestions I offered: though there were not a *single fact* that could be adduced respecting the mal-treatment of *many* of our fellow-creatures in the Islands, yet *in this Country*, while its laws and liberties remain (and I pray with Paul Sarpi “*esto perpetua*”), *the principle* upon which the abolition of the Slave Trade must be founded, namely, that no body of men hath any right for the purposes of interest and convenience to captivate, or enslave, or oppress any other; this principle, I say, *will* and *must* remain also.

Since the publication of the letter, I have also myself endeavoured to obtain all possible information upon the subject of it. But remote from the seat of intelligence, and little connected with those who are best able to afford it, I could not procure the satisfaction I wished—all that I have obtained accompanies this impression.

I must here correct a mistake, though not at all affecting the fact alledged, respecting Macmahon: a mistake which might easily happen to any one who has not carried an almanack in his head for twenty years. Macmahon died, not 18, but, four or five and twenty years ago; and the funeral I was present at was indeed at the estate which *was his*, where, at the time, I heard the fact alledged; but it was at the funeral of his heir (whether immediate in succession or not I cannot tell), Mrs. Thornhill, who bequeathed the estate to her second husband General Thornhill, to the prejudice of her family; which introduced a discourse of the many hands the estate had passed through, and none long possessed it; and some remarked that there was a divine visitation in it, for the rightful heir before Macmahon and his mother Lady Savage, was a youth who was suddenly missing, nobody knew how, but whose skeleton was afterwards supposed to be found plastered up in a wall

wall of that house ; and to carry on the sequel of crimes, Macmahon's character was mentioned, tho' that was not the first of my hearing of it. But this, to the best of my recollection, was the occasion of my confounding in my memory the two funerals.

Of the humanity of Dr. Mapp I was assured upon a visit to his son soon after his return from college, upon my observing an uncommon number of young negroes playing before his windows : and the flourishing state of his fortune was communicated to me by Mr. Christopher Moe, a gentleman of known probity, who was left, I believe, executor or guardian, or both. The overplus of £ 12,000 was either laid out on an additional estate, or in the funds—but I think I have heard that both an additional estate was purchased, and that money also was laid up in the funds\*—I know not any such exaction as requires one to remember every particular of another's private fortune. Sufficient is it that humanity increased his stock, and that he died possessed of the fruits of it.

Another fact upon which I have founded an argument, is the number of blacks in Lord Clarendon's time in the island of Barbadoes†, with which I have compared the supposed importations since.

\* This has since been confirmed by the proper authority.

† See note on page 19.

Not having Lord Clarendon's history by me, I could not consult it to see if my citation was exact. I have seen no library but my own hereabout, and that is a *portable* one. The book I read nearly twelve years ago, to amuse the sad hours of war, in a military expedition, and not to lay up notes for unforeseen contingencies. As to the importations since his time, I stated them as I had variously heard, alleging that I had not the means of ascertaining them exactly, and therefore wished them to be enquired into. A friend who resided near 30 years in the West Indies, and from whom I received several articles of information contained in this impression, says, they are stated too high, though he could not give me a precise statement\*. But I suppose if *one ship*, according to his information, had upwards of nine hundred on board, the average of importation will be at least a thousand yearly—and that would give a hundred thousand lost in a hundred years—not to reckon the original decrease from 100,000 to 90,000—a proportion which should certainly depopulate the globe in a century.

My friend informs me that some Negroes (he

\* A Merchant in London, who was long resident in the island of Barbadoes, informs me that the average import into that island for seven years, from accounts now by him, from 1740 to 1747, was 2600.

does not say how many) have of late years been taken to the new-ceded islands; and some others have been taken off by their owners to avoid legal claims. To enlarge the number of the latter is not for the credit of the island; and suppose ten thousand to have been carried to the other islands, the number diminished since Lord Clarendon's time—the argument yet stands upon the same ground.

It is acknowledged there is still a continued importation; for the future prevention of it is opposed—Now that importation *must* have been considerable within the last forty or fifty years at farthest—for old Hamlet Fairchild was reckoned to have thrown away a fortune by not accepting Guinea consignments, because he said “he would not deal “in blood;” and Wood and Symonds (much within that period) having received those consignments, made, it is well known, a very considerable fortune by them.

Now either the importation is considerable, or it is inconsiderable: if it is *considerable*, my *premises* are good; scil. that there is a great waste of the species—if it is *inconsiderable*, my *conclusion* is good; scil. that it ought to be abolished: for, if *inconsiderable*, the benefit of importation is *inconsiderable*; and it ought to be abolished as doing little good, as productive of much evil, as preventing also much good  
by



by the natural increase, and other means stated in the letter.

“ In the year 1768, by a statement of the Abbé Raynal (Hist. In. Book II. cited by Thomas Cooper, Esquire, in his Letters on Slavery) there were 104,000 Negroes exported out of Africa: the *English* exported for their islands 53,100; their colonies on the North continent carried away 6300;—the French 23,500;—the Dutch 11,300;—the Portuguese 8,700;—the Danes 1,200.” This account also tallies with the conclusion deducible from the following fact, published by authority (in France). In 96 years, ending in 1774, 800,000 Slaves had been imported into the *French part* of St. Domingo, of which there remained only 290,000 in 1774. Of this *last* number only 140,000 were Creoles, or natives of the island—i. e. of 650,000 Slaves the whole posterity was 140,000. Considerations sur la Colonie, &c. Cooper.—The average annual consumption therefore (he proves) of imported Slaves to be 100,000, which are so many reasons against the Slave Trade.

I have heard it however alleged, and indeed seen something like it in print; that in all this we do a great deal of good to the Negroes, for we thus prevent



vent their destroying one another at home; but I am apt to believe, if, in the time of our civil wars at home, the French or Dutch had come with such-like mood and figure upon this country, they would have been answered with swords and bullets; and whoever says they ought not, in that case, to have been so answered, deserves to have such logic applied to himself.

\* If the 50,000 annually imported into our islands be divided among them in a ratio proportionate to their respective extent or population, a pretty good estimate may be formed of the annual consumption of each.

In a word; if the slave trade be consistent with the moral law or with the gospel, pursue it—if not, give it up, or call not yourselves moralists or Christians.

I have set down nought in malice; for I am scarcely enough acquainted with any one interested in this business to have resentments against any. *Oblitusque meorum, obliviscendus et illis.* Among the very few West Indian gentlemen to whom I am known, I am persuaded there is great worth and humanity; one gentleman in particular,

\* The total number imported into all the islands, in 1771, was 47,146. Long's Jamaica, vol. 1, p. 492.

of large fortune, had very serious thoughts of liberating his own slaves; till it was represented to him, that under the present system of the islands, through his humane care it might be as well for them as for himself to remain as they were. But, *magis amica veritas*: oppression of every species—*my heart detests it as the gates of hell*. And the gospel I preach teaches me to promote the general interests of MAN, but especially his moral interests; of whatever nation, complexion, religion, or government he be.

I may be supposed to have written with some feeling and sincerity upon this subject, when I declare that *the man* whom of all others upon earth I most loved and honoured, who was of the strictest virtue and the warmest benevolence, in the most solemn hour of life, said he had nothing in his retrospect of life to regret, but that he had been ever connected with a system of slavery, which was injurious to the moral sentiment of the master, and the person of the slave—yet may my last end be like his!

*Middleham,*

*Middleham, Yorkshire, Oct. 19, 1787.*

S I R,

**I** TAKE the liberty of troubling you in consequence of an advertisement I have just seen in the York paper, by which I find several humane gentlemen, to their infinite honour, have notified their design to move in Parliament for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. Being myself a native of the West-Indies, though established in this country, I feel myself interested in the cause you have nobly espoused, and wish to contribute my mite of information, to which your publick invitation encourages me.

I conceive, Sir, if it can be proved that the natural increase of the negroes already in the islands would be fully adequate to the cultivation of them, and that such natural increase would be secured by humane treatment, no argument could then be brought against the abolition of this accursed traffic, but from the private interest of a few individuals, on this side of the Atlantic chiefly.\*

Though

\* The political necessity of the Slave Trade can be supported only upon these two pleas. First, That the natural increase of the  
the

Though it must be from a number of facts that the above position can derive incontrovertible evidence, yet I will state one or two remarkable ones, referring you to persons in London to authenticate them in a better manner than I am able to do.

About seventeen or eighteen years ago, a Mr. Macmahon died upon his estate in the parish of St. George in the island of Barbadoes. The estate was valued, as far as I can remember, at about

the negroes is not adequate to the labour of cultivation. Secondly, That it is a source of commerce to the subject at home. The first plea is overthrown, if instances are brought from plantations to prove the natural increase sufficient for the purpose of cultivation: To the second it may be answered, That new sources of commerce are perpetually opening. Before the American war it was supposed by some, that the existence of this country depended on the trade with America. It has been proved we lost more than we gained by that commerce, and we flourish better without that country than we did with it. Our waste lands are an object that would employ to advantage a great capital in their cultivation, and be of more benefit to the nation than all the trade of Guinea. If the settlement already established at Sierra Leona were recruited with the free negroes who are persecuted and starving in Nova Scotia and New Providence, to the number of several thousands, who are civilized, and excellent husbandmen, (and they might be conveyed in returning transports and store-ships), their labours would produce such quantities of rice, tobacco, cotton, and indigo, (which they have been used to cultivate, and which are almost of spontaneous growth in Africa) as would form very valuable articles of commerce to this country.

30,000 *l*.

30,000*l.* that money. Its late possessor had been in possession of it seven or eight years; but finding it incumbered with a debt to a merchant in London, he resolved to pay off this incumbrance by extraordinary exertions: in consequence of which, he destroyed the health and lives of many of his negroes\*. He was therefore obliged to supply their place with others purchased from time to time during the space of seven years; till at length, upon his own demise, his estate was left precisely in the same state of incumbrance he found it; the money lost by the death of his slaves being found equal to the original debt upon his estate.

Nearly about the same time, or a little before died Dr. Mapp of the same island, a gentleman who possessed an estate of less value than that above mentioned, being (as I believe) but about the value of 20,000*l.* currency; in a soil less rich, and at a greater distance from market. This gentleman was rather the patriarch than the master among his ne-

\* Since writing the above, a gentleman of the Island has assured me it was ascertained from a negro-levy (or poll-tax) that in two years the number of Macmahon's slaves was lessened nearly one half, *i. e.* from 170 to 95, by his severity: and that it was his usual boast he did not desire a newly purchased slave to live longer than four years, in which time he could be sufficiently repaid for the purchase. The same gentleman assures me that his own negroes doubled their number in eighteen years:

groes.



groes. Of provisions they had a plentiful supply; his tenderneſs gave them a long reſpite from labour during the heat of the day, from eleven to three, and proper reſreſhments were added in the ſultry interval without any labour of their own. Thus ſoſtered by a fatherly care, their increaſe was wonderful. Another eſtate, on which there were no negroes, was purchaſed, in order to receive the overflow from the original one; which purchaſed eſtate was, I believe, of the value of 12,000 *l.* currency. The daughter of this gentleman had a ſuitable portion, and the ſon inherited a clear fortune of above 40,000 *l.* more than double the original property. The daughter is married to a moſt reſpectable gentleman, of good fortune, H. A. Eſq.\* who will, I dare ſay, being a perſon of great humanity, certify you further on a ſubject that does ſo much honour to the memory of his lady's excellent father; for it is of importance to aſcertain theſe particulars with minute exactneſs. I preſume the well-known houſe of L—— can authenticate the former relation, if it be as I heard it in the iſland, at the funeral of that inhuman perſon Macmahon. Having now no connexion with the Weſt-Indies, and reſiding at a diſtance from town, my communications to you can

\* The gentleman here referred to has been waited on by the Treafurer of the Society, and has confirmed the account.



be of little more service than pointing out the quarter from whence you may derive better information: yet I have not knowingly exaggerated any thing, or misinformed you intentionally.

It is very certain that negroes multiply in warm climates in an infinitely greater proportion than in cold. Even extreme heat does not incommode them: nor are they so liable as the white people to the disorders of warm climates, when their blood is not impoverished by extreme labour, scanty or unwholesome diet. In the West-India islands, and in the southern colonies of North America, they will be full of health and vigour at those seasons, when the whites are affected with fevers and agues, and have swollen legs and jaundiced faces. But if the blacks are diseased with slow fevers and dysenteries, is there any wonder in it, when we consider that milk and fresh meat they never taste? Their food consists of maize, vegetables, and either a little rancid salt fish, or (rarely) a small portion of salt beef or pork from Ireland, that is of the worst quality the market affords; and their drink is, *commonly*, water from ponds, *occasionally* with a little rum in it; and in the rainy seasons they are not always withdrawn from their labours to shelter.

In the northern provinces of North America, (where also I have resided), from the severity of the climate, the increase of the blacks is small (indeed

there are few of them), their natural complexion of glossy black is changed to a dark unhealthy tawney, and they are soon old; yet they keep up their numbers without foreign accession. But warm climates are congenial to them; in them with tolerable treatment they are prolific and long-lived.\* It must therefore be the ill treatment they receive in the islands that renders yearly supplies of new slaves necessary to keep up the number on the plantations: where, when they arrive, many from the loss of their liberty, their friends and country, pine to death; some destroy themselves; few, if any, are capable of much labour till the second or third year. And it is a known fact, that when the planters find new recruits requisite for the cultivation of their estates, they not only prefer native slaves, but will give a considerably greater price for them.

Why then, it may be said, is any planter so blind to his own interest, as not to treat his slaves in a manner that would amply repay his humane attention? Some persons do, and find their account in it. Still this practice is not general: far from it. The planter has passions upon which there is no check in law in favour of the negroe, for whose murder || (if the property

\* " Sir Hans Sloane says, that when he was in Jamaica in 1688, he knew blacks of 120 years old." History of Jamaica, in 3 vols. Vol. I. p. 374. published in 1774.

|| I find that by the laws, for the first offence it is punishable by

property is vested in him) he is not accountable to the magistrate. The planter from extravagancies in this country, from riotous living in his own, and not unfrequently from bad crops, is often deeply embarrassed with debts to the British merchant; or, eager to make a fortune,\* he trusts more to present exactions of labour and parsimonious savings, than to the future product of humanity, or future recompence of liberality. I speak generally: I know there are amiable exceptions; but exceptions imply a rule to the contrary. And lastly, the planter confirmed in habit, inflexible in obstinacy, and rooted in prejudice, is unwilling to try the effect of a lenient and novel system; from which, to say the truth, the vices of his slaves (what can be expected from slaves?) render him often averse.

by fine and imprisonment, if wilful and wanton; but it is not always prosecuted. Prosecution must commence by information in the Court of Exchequer. The attorney general does not prosecute. This is meant of the island of Barbadoes. Beaumont Lashley, in a drunken frolick, stabbed a negroe who was passing by, and gave no provocation. He paid the price of the negroe to the master, but suffered, I am informed, no other punishment.— Punishment may bring on a lingering death, and so might other brutal usage.

\* It is evident the greater the quantity of land allotted to the sugar cane, the less will be left for the cultivation of corn and roots for food; and therefore upon the failure of foreign supplies, the plantations must be, as they often are, distressed for provisions for the blacks.

With respect to the force of prejudice in our islands, we know how invincibly unwilling the white people are to admit the slaves to the privileges of Christianity; to which I believe the venerable Society for propagating the gospel in foreign parts can give ample testimony. And why, upon the foot of humanity I ask the question, are these poor people to be excluded from those comforts of our religion, which its founder commanded to be tendered equally unto all? They are under no incapacity which they do not owe to us. At *New-York* I have seen from twenty to forty black communicants. The people in our *islands* not only neglect\*, but object to the conversion of their slaves, upon pleas, which, if admitted originally, would have annihilated Christianity at its first appearance.

† In the continuation of Lord Clarendon's history,  
we

\* This is said generally, without design to include in the censure those particular worthies who are sincere in the cause of religion and humanity; I wish their number and influence was greater. Since the above letter was written, I have been well informed that a young clergyman of large property in the island of Barbadoes, the Rev. Mr. Holder, has regularly instructed and baptized above sixty of his negroes.

† I do not recollect in what part of the continuation the passage here referred to is to be found. The noble writer speaks of the island being so full of inhabitants, that there was no room for new settlers. This account is confirmed in "The history of European settlements in America,"—"In 1676, which was the

"meridian

we find that, in his time, the number of white inhabitants was 50,000; and of blacks, if I rightly recollect, 100,000 in the island of Barbadoes: about twenty-five years since, the numbers by actual enumeration, were of whites less than 25,000; of negroes 90,000. Now, though the number of whites has apparently diminished in a greater proportion than that of the blacks, yet it is to be observed, that the blacks are stationary; they do not migrate; the whites do: nor is the increase of the whites from new comers in a greater proportion than the number of natives that migrate or live elsewhere: besides that the climate is more in favour of the blacks than of the whites. It is now, in round numbers, a hundred years since Lord Clarendon wrote his continuation. In this space of time the whites have diminished about one half; the number of blacks have lessened in the proportion of nine to ten, notwithstanding the yearly importation of 5000,\*

"meridian of this settlement, their whites were computed to be  
 "much about fifty thousand, but their negroe slaves were increased to be upwards of one hundred thousand."—Vol. 2. page 87. sixth edition. Jefferys, in his *West India Atlas*, speaking of the black inhabitants of this island, brings down their present numbers to 75 and 80 thousand—The latter, I am just informed, is nearest the mark. This of course strengthens my argument.

\* This is agreeable to a general position of Mr. Hume, respecting the annual supply of the islands. Long's *Jamaica* makes the number formerly imported into Barbadoes to be 6000.



as I have heard : but stating it only at 4000, or even 3000, that would prove the original stock of blacks to have been lost just so many times over, *i. e.* five, four, or three, in the space of a century, besides the diminution from 100,000 to 90,000 ; so that while the whites\*, in a climate less favourable to them, have only lost one half of their original stock, the blacks have lost it four or five times over. How near all these particulars are to the precise fact, I have not the means of ascertaining ; but in a general view, I believe they are sufficiently near to shew that the blacks in our islands are diminished, through mal-treatment, in a proportion, which were it to prevail equally in all countries, in a century would depopulate the globe. But I think it would be worth while to examine accurately into these particulars, as an average calculation of the loss humanity sustains in our islands, would be an argument that *no man* with the feelings of *a man* could have the face to reply to. I think too the amount of the annual import of slaves into our islands might be easily ascertained here at home, from the accounts of sales ; that amount might be compared with the exports of produce from the islands ; and the comparison would

\* This diminution of the number of whites, Long's Jamaica asserts to have risen from emigration, on account of the impoverishment of the soil, and the joining of many small properties together.



shew how much of his produce the planter loses, and the proportionate charge upon it, which the consumer pays, for a traffic that a little time and some humanity would render useless.

The immediate and effectual remedy for the diminution of slaves in the islands, would be the *entire abolition of the slave-trade*. This would necessarily oblige the planter to such care of his negroes, as would at once essentially serve the cause of humanity, without giving him any occasion for the plea that his rights are infringed, or his property invaded: for surely, however he may have acquired a property of the slaves now under his dominion, he can have none in those who are not: he can have no greater right to recruit his gang with the inhabitants of Guinea, than with the inhabitants of Britain. Nor can the British merchant be better intitled to buy or sell the inhabitants of Guinea, than the inhabitants of Guinea are to buy or sell him. Let him suppose himself at Algiers, and ask himself what he would think of his chains, or of the right that imposed them? What *if it were true*, that the British merchant buys only the captives taken in war; war is made in Guinea that the captives may be sold to him? It is the receiver of stolen goods that makes the thief.

For all the blood spilt in such wars, for all the villages set in flames by the contending parties, for all the ravages incident to war, for all the tears and sufferings of captives whose attachments are violently broken, for all the cruelties they endure in the course of their voyage,\* or under a rigid task-master when sold for slaves, the merchant is to answer. He sets up self-interest as his idol, and stabs humanity as the sacrifice to it. And shall the rest of the world sit down quietly, and suffer their common humanity to be thus injured and insulted, that the trader may eat turtle, and the daughter of the skipper of a vessel flounce in silks or muslins ?

\* The following relation I had from a particular friend, whose unquestionable veracity is to me sufficient to determine my belief of it.

Within a few years past a Guinea ship, bound to the West-Indies with upwards of *nine hundred negroes* on board, being kept long out at sea by calms and contrary winds, was reduced to great distress. To save the seamen and *some* of the negroes, *most* of the latter were thrown overboard tied back to back ; and there actually arrived in the ship when she reached her port, only one hundred negroes out of more than nine. I solemnly assure the reader, that the narrator of this fact is a person of good and unexceptionable character, and that he had the means of knowing it to be true.—If so, it were better, in the eye of justice and of heaven, that the sugar trade should be annihilated for ever, than that such an instance should again occur.

But

But it is a branch of national commerce, and is allowed by the legislature. So, anciently, among the states of Greece was piracy not only allowed, but esteemed honourable. But in a matter so evidently contrary to every principle of common justice, where is the man, with shame in his face, or honesty in his heart, that in a national assembly will *dare* avow such a cause? "Public and national injustice," says Polybius, "differs from private theft and robbery, but in being more destructive." If we admit the plea, *from necessity*, for such a traffic, where shall we stop? Is not the plea of the robber who is hanged, as good? *Fiat justitia, ruat cælum.* The friends of liberty must, upon their own principles, reprobate this worst species of tyranny: the *worst*, because no other has so blasting an effect on morals, no other so thoroughly vitiates the heart. The Christian cannot countenance it; his Bible shews him, that "men-stealers" are classed with "murderers of fathers and mothers, and perjured persons," 1 Tim. chap. i. ver. 10. And will he mix in such a crew? Will he give them his influence and support? They who read and believe their Bible, may learn from the histories and prophecies it contains, that though Divine Providence is pleased to permit one nation

to

to oppress another, and though the oppressing power be the scourge of Divine Justice, yet vengeance will revert to the oppressor at last, because he seeks the injury, not the reformation, of the oppressed. And therefore believers in a Divine Providence will see much to dread in the encouragement of the slave-trade. "He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity; he that taketh the sword shall perish by the sword." Rev. xiii. 10. "By the death of Thessalonica and her sons," says a learned historian, "the whole royal family of Philip king of Macedon was totally extirpated; as that of Alexander had been before in the death of his two sons, Ægus and Hercules. *And so these two kings that had made so many tragedies in other princes families, had them all at length by the just ordination of Providence,\* brought home to their own: both Philip and Alexander, and all that were descended of them, dying violent deaths.*" Prideaux Connex. vol. II. p. 808. But observe the reverse of the medal: The heir of Persia kneeling by his

\* Horace, an author whom none will accuse of superstition, carries the matter still higher, referring the civil wars of his day to the murder of Remus as their judicial cause:

*Sic est: acerba fata Romanos agunt,*

*Scelusque fraternæ necis;*

*Ut immerentis fluxit in terram Remi,*

*Sacer nepotibus cruor.*

EPOD.

dying

dying father Darius Nothus, inquires earnestly, "By what arts did you reign so happily for yourself and people?" "By doing in all things," answered the dying prince, "that which was just both towards God and towards man." Ib. p. 614.

Could that infernal traffic in human blood be annihilated, the condition of slavery in the islands would be meliorated; the native negroes would be more tractable, more readily acquire the regard of those among whom they were born; and be more easily converted to Christianity, because they might be more easily informed. At length, by the mild and uniform operation of Christian principles, slavery itself might be abolished. For though Christianity at its first promulgation, for obvious reasons, did not affect to introduce any alteration in the civil rights of men, yet its genuine tendency is friendly to civil liberty, as Montesquieu has observed in its favour, and Gibbon has dared to allege in its reproach. That *slavery* is not at all necessary to the cultivation of the sugar cane, is evident; for Sicily, within a few centuries, manufactured sugar, as Cochin China now does, without any assistance from slaves. But were it otherwise, what would, what should, be the choice of Britons; to have sugar in their tea, or to set nations free from the scourge, the chain, and the yoke?



To the planter the prohibition of the slave trade would be immediately beneficial, and the benefit would be progressive with time, as it would immediately raise the value of his negroes, whose numbers also would be increased by a melioration of the system of slavery :

To the British merchant it would be equally beneficial, in a similar manner ; for none of the produce of the islands being expended in the purchase of slaves, more would be left for the payment of debts to Britain :

To the British nation it would be beneficial, because the planter, cultivating the sugar-cane at less expense, could afford his produce at a lower rate ; because, also, seamen and soldiers would not be sent to perish\* in the unhealthy climates of Africa :

To the American States it would afford a proof, that we are no less friendly to liberty than they, who

\* Among other causes of loss of health, one is remarkable;—the Guinea worm, which at first, as a small insect, perforates the sole of the foot ; then becoming a worm, extremely fine, but of great length, works its way up to the knee, and destroys the limb, unless extracted ; and to extract it is a work of difficulty. The subtilty of its poison, if broken in the operation, occasions the loss of a limb or lameness. I have seen seamen begging in the West-Indies, who have been discharged from their ships on this account.

have



have already shewn to us an example, in this respect, which we ought first to have given :

To the moralist and philanthropist it would afford matter of just and happy triumph, by extending and supporting the influence of their principles in the province of politics ; where they have hitherto for the most part resembled the condition of Virgil's mariners,

——“ *Rari nantes in gurgite vasto :*”

To all the world it will prove our equity and humanity, and produce a confidence in the national virtue, which would be felt in peace and in war, in our funds, our commerce, our treaties :

To government it will secure the affectionate and zealous service of those who, at all conjunctures, are its best, though not its clamorous friends, the intelligent and virtuous, who for their numbers and weight are too respectable to be slighted :

To nations yet unborn it will transmit liberty and happiness :

To the reign of George the Third it will give peculiar lustre, and exhibit him as the friend of mankind at large, whom the noblest zeal in the support of piety and morals at home distinguishes as the real father of his people !

I have

I have not, Sir, intentionally mis-stated any circumstance, and I am out of the way of more correct information. What I have written is dictated by an ardent wish for the success of your cause.

I have some pamphlets which have been published upon this subject, and will circulate them among my neighbours.

I am, Sir,

With great Respect,

Your most obedient

Humble Servant,

ROBERT BOUCHER NICKOLLS,

DEAN of MIDDLEHAM.

*Samuel Hoare, Jun. Esq.  
Lombard-Street, London.*

P. S. " Your

## P O S T S C R I P T.

Your letter, Sir, of the 27th December, has suggested some further reflections :

To the general interests of human nature, and in the annals of mankind, the abolition of the slave trade, upon principle, would prove a *new* and *important* æra. For I believe it may be remarked with truth, and, if true, most worthy of notice, that no human government (if we except what little has been done on this head in America) has ever yet authoritatively declared by a public act, “ that no part, party or body of men hath any right to oppress, captivate, or wage war upon any other, for any of the purposes of dominion or interest, public or private.” It is a principle for which the world is indebted to revealed religion, which alone declares the equal origin, and regards, as equal, the natural rights of all. The Greek and Roman patriots respected no liberties, no rights, but their own—if they were assailed, the bull of Phalaris could not bellow louder. The rest of the world, foreigners and barbarians, (who were all but themselves) they considered as fair game and lawful plunder. “ Si tribuendum est jus suum cuique,”  
said

said the Roman orator, "redeundum ad casas;" Even our own boasted Magna Charta had only the freedom of the higher orders for its object; being restricted in its principle by the distinction it makes, "*nullus liber homo capiatur*," &c. Let this principle then (readily, I grant, admitted in discourse,) be but fairly adopted in every national code, and regularly applied and appealed to, and there is an end of oppression and slaughter:—And what nation so worthy of leading the way, or on whom will the expectation of the world so much turn as the most enlightened upon earth? The law of gravitation conserves all things in their place and order, from the dust of the balance to the planetary orbs and distant worlds; and this principle, if permitted to operate, would equally preserve the nations of the earth in perfect harmony. It would, to give a single instance from past events, have preserved to Spain peopled provinces, but ill exchanged for gold: It would have kept her hands pure from Peruvian blood, which yet cries against her to Heaven, and will be heard.

The giving an authoritative sanction to this traffic, or its abolition, by the legislature, will, under either event, establish a principle in its consequences diffusive and perpetual. The national character will either be exalted on the one hand by  
the

the virtues of justice and generosity pervading the mass of subjects ; or, on the other, degraded and debased in its principles and sentiments by the decree ; “ *that violence and injustice may allowably be exerted towards helpless nations, for the purposes of interest and convenience.*” And how such a principle, under such high sanction, will operate throughout all the smaller ramifications of society ; how bad men will be brought to observe the distinction, *that only salt water can then make*, between Africans abroad, and fit subjects for plunder at home, the authors of such a decree, should it ever be made, must determine ? They must take on themselves too all its consequences, moral, political, and judicial, with respect to Divine Providence. Cæsar, an atheist, started from sleep when dreaming of his murdered million. And what anodyne shall, *at a certain hour*, compose a mind corroded with the sense of having rendered irremediable the misery, and of having sanctioned the murder, of many millions !

For the success of your endeavours, Sir, I entertain the most sanguine hopes, not only from the spirit of the nation in general, but from the liberal and noble principles of the higher orders in it ; for what is nobility but pre-eminence in virtue ? and, with the *highest* of all, the charities that bless human life, and adorn human nature, are inmates.



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## A P P E N D I X, No. I.

The Writer of the following Letter (given in his own Words) resided upwards of Twenty Years in the West-Indies.

Extract of a Letter to the DEAN OF  
MIDDLEHAM.

ACCORDING to the best of my remembrance the following estates for about 20 years, under the management of *humane and merciful men*, kept up their stock of Negroes by the natural increase:—Sir William Fitzherbert's estate in St. Andrews;—three estates of the late Col. Newton in Christ's Church and St. James's;—the estates of the late Mr. Haggat in St. George's and St. Peter's;—the estate of Mr. Graves in St. Lucy's;—the estate of the Hon. William Bishop in St. Lucy's;—the estate of Colonel Maynard in St. Michael's;—an estate of Sir Philip Gibbes, whilst under his own direction;—the estate of Mrs. Ferchuson in St. Peter's;—the estates of the late Thomas Alleyne, Esq. during the life of Mr. Rolstone;—the estate of

Mrs. Street during the life of Mr. Johnstone.—  
 These are all that I can at present recollect. Why  
 the natural increase of the Negroes is not general, is  
 owing, I am convinced, to the following causes :

1st. Planting too large a number of acres under  
 canes by a third, or at least a fourth, which obliges  
 them to have too few acres under provisions, and  
 those in general much neglected. In consequence  
 of which the poor Negroes are cruelly oppressed,  
 and half starved.

2d. Placing cruel and unfeeling managers on the  
 estates, under whose direction an increase of Negroes  
 is not more to be expected, than an increase from a  
 flock of sheep, if a wolf were the shepherd.

3d. Making the negroes perform all the labour  
 (comparatively speaking) with very little assistance  
 from cattle and horses, and no assistance at all from  
 implements of husbandry, such as hoe-ploughs,  
 ridgets, which might be rendered very useful in  
 weeding the grounds after the hard surface had been  
 broken up. But so obstinately do they persist in their  
 old habit and custom of making their Negroes do  
 every thing, that they treated a worthy and humane  
 clergyman as a whimsical and foolish man, who in-  
 troduced them on his estate, though they saw how  
 greatly his Negroes were relieved by it. You may  
 ask, and with reason, as a man of feeling and hu-  
 manity,

manity, why sugar canes are made the *first*, and provisions (on which the very existence and support of the poor Negroes depend) the *last and least* consideration, especially when the labour required to plant one acre of canes, will at least plant *ten* of corn?—I answer, because on making great crops of sugar (and not on the preservation of the Negroes, by a plentiful supply of provisions) depends the same, and too often the continuance in office of the manager. This is the true cause of all the oppression to the poor Negroes. Several large estates that I know, from having been managed upon that cruel and impolitic plan (impolitic even with regard to this life) have lost the greatest part of their Negroes. If therefore the slave trade were abolished, they could then have no hope of recruiting their gang, but by the natural increase of the Negroes, which would most effectually preclude all such cruel conduct, and compel those to be humane from interest, who are not so upon principle.

## A P P E N D I X, No. II.

**A**N intimate friend, for whose veracity I can pledge myself, writes to me in these words: "My own Negroes" says he, "and my mother's, in twenty years increased more than double. I lived in several different parts of the island, and my Negroes were employed in the business of the field. But then they had a sufficiency of wholesome food when well, and the utmost care taken of them when sick. Sir John Alleyne's, Mr. Cumberbatch Sobers, Dr. Ellcock's, the Rev. Mr. Carter's, the Rev. Mr. Haynes Gibbes's, have also (from humane treatment) increased, though perhaps not in exactly the same proportion with my own. A great many of the middling and poorer sort of people's negroes increase in a much larger proportion than they do in general on large estates. I knew a poor woman, in St. Joseph's parish, who from one negroe girl, raised up six children to be men and women, who used to work together with their mother under me. Why they do not increase in the same proportion on estates is obvious; the children, till they are capable of labour, have not in general above a third or half the allowance of food that is given to their

mothers



mothers, who themselves have but the scanty allowance of nine pints of corn (i. e. not *British*, but corn of that country less nutritious) and three or four herrings a week, and they (the mothers) from being made to labour as hard as the rest of the negroes, have neither strength, spirits, nor time to prepare that allowance which is given them and their children; but often commute it for a bit of bread, or any little thing that is already prepared, of not half the value of the corn, and consequently starve both themselves and their children. I am convinced (he goes on) from 30 years experience of my own success, and that of some others, in raising negroe children, that there is hardly a situation in the island which the negroes could not increase in, if the children had a more liberal allowance of food and clothes; and if their mothers were indulged with a couple of hours extraordinary in the day, to attend to their children, and prepare their food in a proper manner: and this regulation, joined to proper medical assistance when they were *sick*, and humane usage when they were well, would render the slave-trade unnecessary.—Another cause that militates powerfully against the natural increase of the negroes is the *ill-timed* parsimony of the owners. The doctors, or apothecaries, employed to attend the poor negroes in sickness,

ness, instead of being paid for their medicines by the *dose*, are allowed a fixed annual quota for each negroe, of five shillings *currency* (i. e. about three shillings and nine pence sterling). If a contagious or epidemical disease breaks out, the Doctor having made so hard a bargain, has no alternative but to suffer himself, or let his patients die."

## A P P E N D I X, No. III.

THE author of "Considerations on the Emancipation, &c." has misrepresented my statement respecting Dr. Mapp's estate. Two instances were adduced of the different effects of humane and inhumane treatment of slaves in the cultivation of West-India estates. Inhumanity proved unsuccessful. Humane and judicious care was shewn to be productive of riches, by the increase of labourers, (and by consequence the fruits of labour) upon an estate in such a degree as to require additional lands for them to work upon. And I am authorized by the family to declare, that my representation of the success of this humane treatment, falls short of what I might with truth have asserted. The case is clear: the embarrassment is not in my statement. This writer, in his 7th page, shall furnish an answer to himself. "It is the anxiety of making the most of an estate, which excites those severities against which the oppugners of slavery have declaimed: for West-India estates render only in proportion as they are wrought. Hence a disproportionate gang are almost sure of being over-worked; whilst one that is more than sufficient to the labour of an estate experiences  
many

many indulgences. Not being worked beyond their strength they are healthy and happy, and breed faster, and correction is chiefly confined to a few perverse subjects, such as are found in all societies." Now, this very concession proves the very points we aim at establishing: scil. That the avarice of the planter occasions those severities against which the friends of humanity exclaim:\*

—That not being worked beyond their strength, negroes will be healthy and happy, and breed faster:

—That then correction will chiefly be confined to a few perverse subjects.—

So that the position advanced by the friends of humanity is allowed and confirmed by this writer; scil. That the avarice of the planter creates the sufferings of his negroes; but that humanity will secure their natural increase. The abolition of the slave trade will therefore, by cutting off the resource of inhumanity and avarice, oblige him to the exercise of humanity, that his negroes being "healthy and happy, may breed faster."—Q. E. D.

\* Whether the complaint of the friends of humanity urged against the immoderate labour of the West-India slaves be not just, the following passage may determine: "The custom of employing the slaves out of crop, in *extra work*, until nine or ten at night, after labouring hard all day, which prevails in some islands, ought to be abolished, as being repugnant to the true interest of the Planter, as well as to humanity." Directions from an Old Planter of Grenada, printed for Strahan, 1785.

The

The immediate and determinate object of the friends of humanity is, for the above and other reasons, the abolition of the *African slave trade*; this is a distinct question from the emancipation of slaves already in the islands, with which it is designedly confounded by the friends of slavery, in order to discourage the former measure, by holding out to the nation, in terrorem, the making a compensation to the islands for the latter, in a sum purposely exaggerated to three times the value of their slaves. But however such an emancipation may be desired, when preparatory measures shall produce a willingness in the planter to admit, and a proper disposition in his slaves to receive it; abrupt, violent, or injurious proceedings form no part of the views of the friends of humanity. I shall only observe upon this head, from Dean Tucker, that in the East-Indies, sugar manufactured by freemen is sold at half a crown sterling the hundred weight; while in our islands where it is manufactured by slaves, it sells for twenty-five shillings the hundred.\*

The author of "Observations, &c." asserts, that "a West-India estate must be wrought by men only." This is a mistake which he will find corrected by fact. The plough has been used in Jamaica, and found to answer; *one plough* turned up as much ground in *one day*, and in a much better

\* See "Observations of Mons. de Poivre," at the conclusion.



manner, in the parish of Clarendon, than *one hundred negroes* could perform with their hoes in the same time. This machine not only saves the labour of a great many negroes, but enables the planter to cultivate more ground every year by many acres than he could otherwise compass. Long's History of Jamaica, 3 vol. 4to. vol. 1. p. 449, 451, 452, note.

The author of "Considerations," says, p. 7. "It is the anxiety of making the most of an estate which excites those severities, &c."—Who doubts it? And is the excess of an evil a reason why it should not be remedied? The master's anxiety to be rich oppresses his slaves—and does this excuse his oppression? Should his anxiety to be rich take another turn, and lead him to be a rogue, will that anxiety do away the crime, or its punishment?

This writer asserts, with others, that the negroes in our islands have always a day in the week to themselves, sometimes half a day, exclusive of Sunday. Now I take upon me to aver, from experience, as far as an experience of *one island* extends, that except at the three great festivals, or upon some very particular occasion, I *never knew* an instance of an intire day being given them, exclusive of Sunday: and very rarely, not once in a quarter, even *half* a day. Nor is Sunday wholly a sabbath to them. I have seen the sugar furnaces sometimes  
burning

burning at sun-rise on the morning of Sunday : but, *commonly*, on the morning and evening of that holy-day, the negroes on many estates are obliged to gather from the fields provender for the cattle, which, but for the avarice of labour, might have been collected the day before. Sunday also being their only stated holy-day in the week, it is well known that it is also their *market-day*; when such as can, go with their little products, some of them from the most distant parts of the island, and return exhausted, to the labours of the ensuing week.

I can also aver, from my own knowledge of the matter, that under certain masters, they have for weeks together, especially in crop-time, remained without any supplies whatever, and sometimes received what was very inadequate to the support of nature.

I must be understood, however, to speak with many exceptions. There are gentlemen in the islands, some of whom I had the pleasure of knowing, who not only in the treatment of their negroes, but in all the other parts of their character and conduct, may most truly be said to adorn humanity.

The bad moral qualities of negroes are frequently urged in extenuation of the treatment they receive. Let the father of poetry answer this plea :

Jove

Jove fix'd it certain that whatever day  
Makes man a slave, takes half his worth away.

Pope's HOMER.

It would, however, become the persons who make these objections not to corrupt them still farther, by illicit intercourse, thereby exciting feuds and jealousies, and other ill passions among them; but to endeavour to amend them by religious instruction, of which they partake as little as their fellow-labourers the brutes. That they are capable of such instruction, may be amended by it, and will be grateful for it, I can attest.

The stupidity of negroes is also urged by the friends of slavery as a plea for using them as brutes; for they represent the negroes as little removed above the monkey, or the oran-outang, with regard to intellects. But I am very certain, nothing has been written by the late defenders of slavery, that discovers half the literary merit or ability of two negroe writers. Phillis Wheatley wrote correct English poetry within a few years after her arrival in Boston from Africa; and there is a Latin ode of considerable length written in classic language by Francis Williams, which is preserved in the 2d vol. and 479th page of Long's History of Jamaica. I never heard of poems by a monkey, or of Latin odes by an oran-outang.

The

The truth is, man is by nature in a “degenerate and degraded state ;” and, without moral and religious culture, but little removed above the beasts that perish. Spurning therefore at inferior considerations, it is a noble, a god-like office in man to rescue his fellow man from such a state of degradation, into that nobler and happier condition, in which moral culture and liberty under the direction of law and religion may place him. Of injustice, oppression, and wrong, the world has had ample experience—’tis time other measures were pursued, if it would be wise and happy : and the believers in religion are fully persuaded that upright and benevolent measures will eventually produce universal order and happiness, if such are uniformly and steadily pursued, whatever may for the present oppose them. For which reason it becomes the clergy to come forward in this business. In this view of things, we do not allow the plea of necessity, urged by the author of Observations, &c. to be any justification of oppression : a necessity too, which often results from the extravagance, the luxury, the avarice of the planter : a point which may be seen fully proved in many passages of the History of Jamaica above referred to. But when the supposed convenience of the planter not only requires rigorous service from his slaves, but op-

poses

poses the author of nature by debarring them from marriage (or which is the same thing, designedly rendering it impracticable, by an undue proportion of the sexes), the diabolical cruelty of such a conduct makes one indignantly spurn at a defence that can neither be offered nor accepted by a man or a Christian.

One principle is advanced by the author of *Observations*, with an effrontery that is worthy of his cause: a principle, common indeed with modern atheists, but which even a pagan moralist (Cic. de Off. passim) severely reprobates; which would open the flood-gates of iniquity, and bear down all the virtue that is in the world; namely, that "justice is founded in public utility," (Cicero says, justice is "*jus suum* cuique tribuere"), that the mind revolts not from acts of atrocious injustice in breach of natural right; that this principle abrogates, annuls, and dispenses with every other, human and divine," p. 27.

If by public utility, be meant universal good to all mankind, or the world at large, this account of utility will annihilate the slave trade and slavery altogether. But, if by public utility, be understood the advantage of one people in opposition to that of others, then must such a limitation of justice, not only annihilate moral right altogether, but



but invariably and necessarily be the source of eternal wars.—But it is doing too much honour to this writer to combat his principle. I merely hold it up to the scorn and abhorrence of every honest man. For after the avowal of such a principle, I will neither converse nor dispute with him; convinced as I am, that unprincipled selfishness is incorrigible by argument.

But as the utility of the slave trade is urged by many, who acknowledge it to be wrong, as to moral principle, I will briefly state a few particulars on this topic.

1. It is disadvantageous, because it is a drawback upon the profits of West-India estates.

At a medium of forty-eight years, from 1702 to 1750, the number of slaves imported for the use of Jamaica, was *nearly* 4000 per annum; for the whole number in that period was 190,511. Long's Jamaica. Now the 4000 reckoned so low as at £.30 per head, amounts to £.120,000 annually. The same author (Book 2. c. 2.) gives the medium of importations into Britain from that island for four years during that period, from Christmas 1728, to May 1732, in sterling value £. 539,499 10s. 3d $\frac{1}{2}$ . The consumption or purchase of slaves was therefore more than a fifth, and nearly a fourth of the exports of that island to Britain.

Again: In the year 1764, the importation of slaves into the island of Jamaica, was 10,223; the price being then higher, suppose these calculated at £.40 sterling per head, and the amount will be upwards of £.400,000 sterling. The total exports that year to Great Britain, &c. &c. was of the value of £. 1,310,919, of which the sum of £.400,000, is very nearly one third. Book 2. c. 5. p. 499.

In the following year (1765) the importation was in a rather larger proportion for a year and a half, scil. in that space of time 16,760. Allowing the exports to be the same as the foregoing year the importation of slaves will be full a third of the exports.

In the year 1768, the average imports for several years was found to be 6000 negroes per annum for the use of the island. Though Long says (book 3. c. 3.) it is too small a number, considering the briskness of the African trade, and that a great many French negroes were brought in from the conquered islands. The average in some of the years of this series was 9000, but others fell short;—reckoning it however, as he does, at 6000; and the price of negroes being estimated (as it stood in 1771) at £. 50 per head, the annual average import was £.300,000. Now, valuing the gross exports still higher

higher, at any part of the above series of seven years, reckoning them as they stood in 1770 (vol. 2. p. 600.) at 1,538,730, the import of slaves (£. 300,000) will be equal to a fifth of the total exports.

Thus have we brought down, through a space of nearly seventy years, the series of importations of African slaves, and exports of colonial produce. The proportion of the former to the latter, in the island of Jamaica, being nearly one *third* in some instances, above a *fourth* in others, and a *fifth* in others, we will call it a fourth upon the whole. Now a fourth every year is equal to the whole exports one year in four; or otherwise, is twenty-five per cent. upon the whole.

Besides; newly imported slaves being from one to three years in seasoning, I may consider their labour the first year as lost: and consequently the interest of the purchase-money at five per cent. as lost also: their maintenance the first year is a dead loss likewise; which at five per cent. on the purchase-money (a very low estimate) makes a loss of ten per cent. upon the original purchase-money, besides a fourth of the annual exports. If the planter borrows money to purchase of the British merchant, he is probably bound to consign to him so many hog-

heads annually ; and if his estate does not produce them, he must run in debt for the purchase of them in the islands, and perhaps lose at home in the sale of them, which commonly seals his ruin. If he borrows in the islands he must give six per cent. at least.

There is then a loss by the importation of twenty-five per cent. upon the exports, besides ten per cent. on the purchase-money of the slaves ; the planter has also to purchase other stock, and is at great expense in other respects, and runs great risks.

An account of the African slave-trade for 1772, makes the annual remittances from the British islands for slaves to be a million and a half ; and the total exports of all the British islands, according to Campbell's Political Survey, were in 1770, three millions seven hundred and odd thousand pounds. Not knowing how many of the slaves may have been re-exported, for whom these remittances are made, I can form no estimate of the annual loss : for it is hardly possible to suppose the loss of the whole fell upon our islands, as the amount would be about three parts in seven, nearly one half of their exports.

But taking the former estimate of twenty-five per cent. altogether, the deduction is such as (one well versed in trade has observed to me) would prove fatal

to a business far more profitable than the cultivation of sugar : as would be found indeed, if the debts due from the islands to Great Britain were to be strictly insisted upon. For, in innumerable instances, the planter is but the steward of the merchant.

The great drawbacks therefore upon the exports, by the purchase of slaves, shew the disadvantage of the trade to the islands, and the wisdom of saving such immense annual sums by promoting the natural increase. For it is observed by Long, that the dead loss is chiefly among the *native African slaves*.\*

2d. The slave trade is disadvantageous to the internal peace and good government of the islands.— The negroes, who have been the chief actors in the seditions and mutinies which have at different times broken out in Jamaica, which is of more value than all our other islands, were the imported Africans ; for the native negroes, so far from confederating with them, are a considerable check upon them.

In 1760 and 1761, a conspiracy was projected and conducted by the Coromantin (African) slaves throughout the island. The whole militia of the

\* I have authentic information from a gentleman who served in a public office in Jamaica, that in the four courts or sessions held once a quarter in that island, there were upon an average 3000 suits each quarter ; of which, far the greater part were for the purchase-money of African slaves :



island was employed for two years to suppress it, aided by the king's ships and several regiments. There fell by the hands of the rebels about sixty persons by murder, and in action. One thousand of the rebel negroes were killed and transported. The rebellion occasioned a loss to the country of above £. 100,000; besides above £. 100,000 expended in erecting parochial barracks, &c. and £. 15,000 for other services.

In 1764 and 1765, there being an importation of above twenty thousand slaves, another insurrection of the Coromantin (*African imported*) slaves happened, in which 19 whites were murdered, and a considerable loss incurred. Long's Jamaica, book. 3. chap. 3. &c.

The slave-trade therefore is disadvantageous, in many and important instances, to the internal peace, good government, and prosperity of the islands.

3. The right policy would be to encourage the natural increase, and relinquish importation.

The native Africans unaccustomed to severe labour in their own country, do not sustain it in the islands so well as negroes born there. They bring with them yaws, and other diseases, which infect the native negroes, and shorten their own lives. We have seen how difficult it is, from habits contracted

tracted in their own country, to bring them to order and submission. Whereas, were the natural increase encouraged, the domestic relations, the influence of those relations, and the planter's care of their young families, would render their temper and character flexible and submissive to government. And if to this, the influence of religion were added, and proper constitutions formed to preserve them from wanton cruelty, and to discourage illicit intercourse between the whites and blacks (on which illicit intercourse are founded many crimes and punishments) all reasonable labour would be performed, and submission rendered, and punishments would be inflicted on such only, as even among free nations would be animadverted upon by the magistrate.

Other good consequences too, favourable both to the colonists and the mother-country, would ensue from the abolition. The gentlemen of the islands would be induced to reside on their estates, and to superintend their own affairs; the prosperity of which would depend, not on great temporary exertions, but on general and permanent good management. To secure a plentiful supply to their negroes, and to save the expense and labour of going to market, they would be induced to raise the articles they now import from America: a saving annually, which Long calculates at nearly £. 39,000 ster. Their residence would bring about them a number of white dependents,

dents, and be more beneficial with respect to the consumption of British manufactures, and employ of British shipping, than their residence in Britain. Schools and seminaries of learning would be promoted. The internal government and interest of the islands would be better attended to ; the increase of whites would strengthen the islands by a more respectable militia. The Creole, or native negroes, might form good seamen, and as such they are now used in the coasters among the islands. And thus, by a train of consequences, the islands would become more prosperous and happy.

I conclude this long appendix with an interesting paper just received from Paris, which will sufficiently prove the successful culture of sugar in Cochin China by *freemen* only.

# O B S E R V A T I O N S

## O N    T H E

### S U G A R   O F   C O C H I N   C H I N A ,

Taken from the original, written in 1750, by M. POIVRE, since Intendant at the Isle of France.

N. B. M. POIVRE travelled in Cochin China the same year, and has published his Journey.

I HAVE thought that I should do well to insert these observations in this place, and that it is of no small consequence to see how abundant and profitable sugar plantations may be made when cultivated by free labourers.

Of all the countries in the East-Indies, the kingdom of Cochin China produces the most sugar, and of the best quality. It is there the most important article of exportation. Seventy-four Chinese *sommes* (a kind of Chinese vessel) and one ship from Macao were in the year 1749 freighted with this article from Fai-fo, the principal port of this kingdom. These vessels carried each 150 tons of sugar, which makes the quantity of 11,250 tons; and the ton being 2000 French pounds, the whole amount is

22,500,000

22,500,000 pounds of sugar ; of which one-third was sugar-candy, the remainder unrefined.

Besides what is exported by foreigners, the inhabitants of Cochin China consume great quantities of sugar. They eat it usually with their rice, and use it in sweetmeats of every kind, and in much greater quantities than we do ; and esteem it a very wholesome food. They assert, that nothing affords so much nourishment as sugar. They fatten their horses, elephants, and buffaloes with sugar cane. But what proves their certain experience of the nutritive quality of sugar, is a regulation which obliges soldiers to eat a certain quantity of sugar cane every day, in order to keep them in good case.



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**N**Otwithstanding this little letter is swathed up with preface and appendix, I beg the reader's patience a few minutes longer. Attempts to justify the oppression of our fellow-creatures are as little consistent with the constitution of this country, as with the spirit of Christianity. But as revelation hath been called in aid of an unrighteous traffick, it may be worth while to take a brief view of this matter as it appears in the Bible.

By the equal origin of *all* mankind, and by the original distribution of the earth, in the time of Peleg, among the sons of Noah, "after their generations, in their nations," Gen. ch. x. national distinction and national independence were unquestionably intended. This we find confirmed by St. Paul: "God that made the world, and hath made of *one blood* all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, hath determined *the bounds* of their habitation," Acts xvii. No after circumstances therefore of conquest, or subjugation, can annihilate the rights of nations derived from the original designation of Providence. And even admitting the African negroes to be the descendants of Canaan

Canaan (though it is probable that they are the descendants of Phut, and that the Phœnicians were the offspring of Canaan), yet does not the prophecy "that they should be the basest of servants," at all justify those who make them such: in the same manner that the prophecies concerning the rejection and sufferings of Messiah, did not justify those by whose hands they were fulfilled, even though a world was saved in consequence.

If it be alleged that the Mosaic law tolerates slavery, and even gives directions concerning it, the answer is obvious; the same law *tolerates* polygamy and divorce, and gives directions concerning them. And yet as that dispensation drew towards a close, and the gospel times approached, both *polygamy* and *divorce* were plainly disapproved by the later prophets, as by the gospel they are forbidden. See Malachi ii. 14—16. The Mosaic law also enjoins circumcision, sacrifices, and other rites: but are we therefore bound to the observance of them?

If it be objected that some parts of the Mosaic law are cancelled by positive precepts of the New Testament, while the laws respecting slavery remain unaltered; I reply, that idolaters and enticers to idolatry, the breakers of the sabbath, not to instance in other offenders, were to be stoned to death, Numb. xv. 35. Deut. xiii. 10. xvii. 5.

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And yet those laws remain unaltered by any positive precept of the gospel. But in these cases we are now guided by the spirit of the gospel, where we find no express direction. That spirit teaches us not to call down fire from Heaven, "for the Son of man is not come to destroy mens lives, but to save them:" to save them in a natural as well as moral sense: and in both senses also "to preach deliverance to the captive, to set at liberty them that are bruised." It may be further observed, that the passage of St. John before cited in the letter, "he that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity," is not applied to the times of Judaism, but of Christianity. Let the apologists for the slave-trade explain this away if they can.

The moral part of the Mosaic law was *extended* by the gospel. The positive part of it, so far as it was purely such, was *cancelled*, "being nailed to the cross." (Coloss. ii. 14.) and therefore St. Paul pronounces it dead, Rom. vii. 1. and ver. 7. Zachary predicts its dissolution, xi. 7, 10. and Jeremy the substituting another in its stead. Though, while in force, it never had any obligatory power, as a positive law, but within the pale of the Jewish church: "What things the law saith, it saith unto them that are under the law," Rom. iii. 9. It formed no part of the divine dispensations to the rest  
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of mankind ; its use was incidental; and as Grotius observes, it came in “ de transverso.” Many of its institutions could have no place out of Judea; and the Gentile Christians are not under the law, but under grace, Rom. vi. 14.

But let those who resort to its authority for a justification of slavery and the slave-trade, be mindful at least of what it prohibits on this head. “ He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death,” Exod. xxi. 16. St. Paul extends this prohibition beyond the Hebrew nation. He speaks of some in his day who desiring to be teachers of the law, understood not what they said, nor whereof they affirmed. “ But *we* know, he adds, that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully : that it is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient ; for *men-slayers*, &c. &c. for *men-stealers*, &c. &c. and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious gospel of the blessed God,” 1 Tim. i. 9. Now if the law be against *men-stealers*, I desire to know how such an appeal to it can favour the slave-trade ? And if it be against *men-slayers*, and whatsoever else is contrary to sound doctrine, how can it favour such treatment of the slaves on board the slave-ships, as necessarily occasions disease and death ? For it is written,

written, Thou shalt not kill : and if killing be the consequence of such treatment, whoever occasions it is guilty of *murder*. But the case of the Hebrew slaves cannot be brought into a parallel with the African slave-trade. Under the patriarchal dispensation, servants, or bond-men, were humble friends. Abraham's steward was his presumptive heir, till the birth of Isaac, Gen. xv. 2. By the Mosaic law, such Hebrews as became slaves could not be sold out of Judea, and their bondage was terminated by the year of jubilee. Their bond-servants were for the most part captives in war, from among the adjoining hostile nations. Even for these a merciful provision was made to rescue them from mal-treatment; they were proselyted, and partook of the religious feasts of their masters. The African negroes are consigned to perpetual bondage by those whom they never offended, or were hostile to : and a miserable voyage in chains, in filth, in famine, has no parallel whatever in Hebrew servitude. To argue from this last to the African slave-trade, is to bounce to a conclusion that is not contained in the premises.

If it be urged, that the gospel leaves as it finds the civil states of men; I answer, this was done for wise reasons sufficiently obvious : but the gospel *principles* " that all are one in Christ Jesus, that there  
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is no respect of persons with God, that we are all members one of another, that if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ;” and the gospel *precepts* concerning benevolence and “ doing to others as we would they should do unto us ;” if observed and applied, would necessarily annihilate slavery and the slave-trade altogether ; “ for love worketh no ill to his neighbour.” Still obedience is enjoined by the gospel upon servants, who were then slaves. For the same reason, to preserve peace and order, and to prevent any plea on this score for rejecting it by the Heathen nations : just as the gospel enjoined obedience to the civil power, which at the very time was in the hands of those monsters of vice, Tiberius, Nero, Caligula. Yet St. John, in the Revelation, represents that very power as the dominion of the Dragon, that is, of the Devil, and predicts its ruin.

The truth is, the gospel was designed, like a little leaven, to leaven the whole lump ; to operate secretly upon mens minds, till it should, by its divine influence, form them to its own temper, and produce its effects in a moral way ; which is analogous to other proceedings of its divine author : and if the justice and benevolence it enjoins under the highest sanctions, were practised amongst its professors, there would not at this day have existed any ground of controversy respecting the slave-trade.

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